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Petroleum Gives Grant to Support CSULB Science Lab
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Signal Hill Petroleum Gives Grant to Support CSULB Science Lab
Details

By Staff Reports
Monday, 07 November 2011 04:29

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3:25pm | Signal Hill Petroleum, a local independent energy company, recently donated \$250,000 to California State University Long Beach (CSULB) for the environmental geochemistry laboratory within the newly built science hall.

The grant supports the purchase of new, state-of-the-art equipment that has never before been offered to students by the university. It also covers equipment maintenance, supplies, and student research for the facility, named the Signal Hill Petroleum Environmental Geochemistry Lab, which has already opened to students.

Signal Hill Petroleum's gift was celebrated along with the completion of the Hall of Science at a dedication ceremony on Friday, September 23rd. The \$105 million building project, which broke ground in 2008, features a 165,000-square-foot science building.

"We are proud to be a supporter of this university and investing in our community," said Debra Russell, Director of Business Development and Community Relations at Signal Hill Petroleum.

The new instruments, according to Dr. Matt Becker, Professor and Conrey Endowed Chair of Hydrogeology at CSULB, include a spectrofluorometer, which has recently been used by students to measure chemical diffusion into bedrock, an ion chromatograph, considered to be "the workhorse of environmental water chemistry labs," said Becker, as well as other instruments used for low temperature geochemical analyses. The cost alone for the ion chromatograph is upwards of \$100,000, according to Becker.

"The laboratory will be a shared space where both undergraduate and graduate students can analyze water and geologic samples with state-of-the-art equipment. The gift will also provide funding for supplies and travel for students conducting research," Becker said.

The lab is comprised of two rooms for a combined 604-square-feet that can accommodate up to 6 students at one time.

Geology is not only important to the mineral and fossil fuel industries, like crude oil, iron and aluminum, but to understanding how the Earth impacts our infrastructure. And there are jobs available in this field. The number of geoscience jobs is expected to increase by 22 percent by 2016, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than double the projected growth rate for all occupations.

The number of students graduating with degrees in science related fields has grown significantly over the past decade, according to CSULB President F. King Alexander. Last year, CSULB awarded 3,100 science-based degrees.

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